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Secretary Holsinger thanks cabinet social workers

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Dear cabinet social workers,

March is Social Work Appreciation Month, and I want to take the opportunity to say thank you to each of you for providing quality service to the cabinet's 800,000 customers this year and for your entire tenure with the cabinet.



Every day, you use your knowledge, experience and instincts to protect Kentucky's most vulnerable citizens. You are dedicated to helping people help themselves whenever and wherever they need it most.

You respect varying cultures and environments. You are especially skilled providing "whole care" for customers and helping them find expert assistance from other resources. You focus more on people's strengths and needs rather than their weaknesses. This is the only way our clients will achieve the ability to become more self-sufficient.

From children to senior citizens, people in all stages of life are assisted by social workers. You provide services in many situations, such as adoptions, adult and child protection cases and ongoing treatment services. Your work may take you to private homes, schools, long-term care facilities, hospitals, senior centers or anywhere else you are needed to provide assistance or ensure safety. Sometimes you are called on in the middle of the night to go to unfamiliar setting to protect our most vulnerable citizens. Amazingly, you can adapt to any situation and are able to serve others with empathy and professionalism.

You continue to make Kentucky a better place -- one person, one family, one challenge at a time. The cabinet and the commonwealth appreciate your contributions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James W. Holsinger, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Secretary James W. Holsinger, Jr., M.D.

CHFS Focus Employee Spotlight: Social workers sound off on job challenges, rewards

By Anya Armes Weber

More than 1,800 cabinet social workers spend every day assisting the state's needy and vulnerable citizens through personal and family crises. They each average about 18 active cases.



March is Social Work Appreciation Month, and CHFS Focus staff asked cabinet social workers to share their thoughts about their work. Of those who responded, most agreed that no workday is "typical" and answers varied about their most valuable job skills and the job's greatest rewards. All agreed that helping families makes their efforts worthwhile.

Here are some of our social workers' own words about their jobs. Look for more responses in next week's CHFS Focus.

Lisa G. Walker, Ohio County

I decided to become a social worker since I grew up in foster care. One of the most important lessons that I have learned is not from working this job but from being a former child in the "system." One thing I think about when working with my clients is that I should not judge them and should treat them as I would like to be treated. Respect is the most important part of my job.

Working for DCBS has been and will continue to be a wonderful experience. I love my job even when there are times that I feel there is nothing I can do.

Cindy Evans, Daviess County

I have learned that there is no "typical day" in foster care and adoption. The most important skills that a social worker can have are flexibility, compassion and a nonjudgmental attitude. I have thought many times, "there but for the grace of God, go I."

In my role as a foster/adoptive worker, the greatest reward is when a child can return home to a better environment and a changed parent. The second-best reward is when children obtain permanent homes through adoption and go to loving, nurturing adoptive parents. All children need and deserve a home.

Jacque Robertson, Logan County

This is a job in which there are never enough resources for us or the families we serve. You learn to make a lot out of

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a little, manage what is available and somehow continue that self-talk that “what I do matters.”

Recognition is limited, appreciation even smaller, but the importance of this position and the services we provide is infinite.

The greatest reward a social worker can have is when a case is closed, yet the family still comes in, calls or remembers you well when you are out in public and can let you know how well they are doing because you helped them in some way.

Deborah Harris, Daviess County

We have to be prepared for about anything at any moment -- to make a placement move or go do an investigation on one of my own cases.



I have learned that most of the rude things people say are only because they don't have anywhere else to vent. We can't take it personally.

The greatest rewards of my job are: knowing that kids are safe from harm and that you've done a good job that day, seeing children smile and be happy and the rare times that the family actually thanks you for what you've done for them.

Norm Hayden, Daviess County

The greatest reward to being a social worker is at the end of a long day, realizing that your efforts directly helped a person to feel safer in their own home, and that perhaps their quality of life improved from your intervention.

One thing I am most grateful to the cabinet for is the Master's of social work stipend program. I am currently an MSW student at Western Kentucky University and will graduate in May. I would not have returned to school had it not been through the stipend program, and subsequently, I was able to serve as the MSW student representative in National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Kentucky chapter. Hopefully, I will be able to bring my experiences and knowledge back to the cabinet and continue to influence quality service delivery.

Susan J. Barnett, Warren County

If you are looking for a monetary award or if you need appreciation as a reward, run far away from social work. However, if a simple smile, a thank you or changing someone's life is reward enough, social work is the job.

In three years with the state, I have seen tears, anger, appreciation and many cases of confusion. The most

rewarding thing in social work is knowing in your heart that you have done something good, something that mattered and something that has changed someone's life permanently. It is rewarding to know that because of your kindness, caring and understanding, someone's life may be changed or even saved. It is wonderful to be able to turn a client's hopelessness and tears into empowerment and strength.

Briana Randolph, Pulaski County

My journey with the cabinet began almost two years ago, and ...even with what I felt was a strong academic background and PCWCP training, I couldn't have been prepared for the reality of doing front-line child protection.

Each day we walk a tight rope...protecting children without disempowering families, adhering to ever-changing policy, holding ourselves accountable to social work ethics and all the while navigating in a world that is becoming ever more dangerous for CPS workers. This work is difficult at best, but I truly believe that practicing social work in child protection is a calling. Every day I am amazed by my colleagues who, like me, balance a job that is often emotionally draining and thankless with the needs of their own families.

Every victory, no matter how small, is reason to celebrate. I am truly proud of what I do and those who stand with me, shoulder to shoulder, trying to make a difference in the lives of Kentucky's children and their families.

Tracie Stafford, Mason County

I have worked with the Cabinet for almost six years. In that time, I have learned that it is so important to do your best to keep families together. I have worked with many children, and each and every one loves their family and wants to be with them. It is so rewarding to be able to work with a family and watch them be reunited.



Family is so very important to me and that is why I chose to be a social worker.

Buford Edwards II, Lincoln County

I have seen how resilient, strong and loving a family unit can be despite being ravaged by poverty. I have seen the debilitating effects of drugs and alcohol on the human body, mind and soul. I have laughed with families, cried with families, been angry at families, connected with families and not understood families.

All the nights, weekends, holidays, 20-hour days (are worth being able to) go home and close our eyes at night,

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and say with confidence, "I have done everything in my power today to make sure that every person I've encountered is safe." The real definition of social work can be summed up in three words: peace, safety and security. That is what it means to be a social worker.

The greatest reward as a worker is hands down that rare, "thank you"- heard from the backseat of the car at midnight traveling I-75 South or scribbled on an old piece of paper with a broken crayon. Those are more precious than diamonds. It is those times you realize that you have made a difference in that person's life that no matter the ultimate outcome, they will remember that somebody, at some time, cared. That is special.

Frances Waddle, Shelby County

My greatest reward as a social worker is when an adoption is finalized. I celebrate with the child(ren) and family by attending the adoption finalization at court. I take pictures of the children and family and give them a lot of support and praise for their accomplishment. It is the best part of my job!

Another reward is watching the foster families helping the children placed with them provide a safe and nurturing home for them to grow and develop. The children usually make remarkable development and emotional progress in a short time. It is also rewarding to observe foster parents reach out and help the birth parents in their difficult situations while seeking what is in the best interest of the children.

It is rewarding when children are reunited with their birth families. Keeping families safe and together is very important in social work.

Leslie Thorn SSCII, McCracken County

We spend a great deal of time waiting.... Waiting on assessments, waiting in court and waiting on the other shoe to drop. We do home visits, pick up diapers, drop off furniture and explain head lice removal (again). We work with many of the same families, and after 11-plus years, I am on my third generation in some cases. That is frustrating.

The job takes a great deal out of a person, and many times our own families are left out. I try to explain to my children that some other children have moms and dads who need extra help, and my job is to help them.

I have learned to be thankful for my own family and the support that I receive.... I have learned to be more patient with families. I try not to expect miracles and remind myself that it takes one step at a time. We need to celebrate

small victories as these families have not had too much to cheer about.

I am very grateful for the team that I am a part of. Without their constant support and shoulders to lean on, I could not do this job.

Susan Barnett-Rowzee, Grayson County

We help families in both small and large ways. We hold a child who cries because momma did not visit. We comfort a mother whose child has just died in her arms because her boyfriend lost his temper while she was at work. We take children to foster care and pray for the best.

We hurt for these clients. We cry. But we get up and we go on because the children need us. We celebrate success with families, and we help the children and the families mourn their losses.

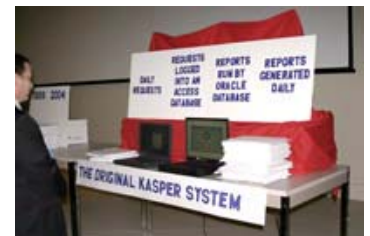
We are human and we do the best we can every day and pray that no child dies today.

And I love working with all these families.

CHFS Focus Program Spotlight: OIG's Drug Enforcement branch

OIG's Drug Enforcement branch powers the tools that help fight prescription drug abuse, diversion

The Enhanced Kentucky All Schedule Prescription Electronic Reporting program, known as eKASPER, was introduced to the public March 16 at a news conference and system demonstration at the Transportation Cabinet building in Frankfort.



The self-service, Web-based system for tracking addictive controlled substances is the first of its kind in the nation, making it possible for doctors, pharmacists, law enforcement officials and other registered users to obtain KASPER reports virtually on demand at any time.

eKASPER is a program of the cabinet's Drug Enforcement and Professional Practices Branch of the Office of Inspector General's Division of Fraud, Waste and Abuse Identification and Prevention. The Division is led by director Zach Ramsey and is the OIG's primary intelligence and recovery division.

The 11-member Drug Enforcement and Professional Practices Branch, headed by branch manager Dave

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Sallengs, administers the Kentucky Controlled Substances Act (KRS 218A) and has a tremendous impact on the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Commonwealth, according to CHFS Inspector General Robert Benvenuti.

In addition to the more than 150,000 KASPER reports that will be produced this year, the branch is managing in excess of 200 ongoing prescription drug investigations, works with the Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure on investigations of physician misconduct, consults with various public health initiatives on drug-related matters, collects fees and issues licenses to controlled substances manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors and handles more than 300 phone calls per month regarding its array of functions. The ability of branch staff to handle such a demanding workload is, "impressive to say the least," Benvenuti said.

The branch was honored for its performance in 2003 as recipient of the state Department for Public Health Commissioner's Group Award of Excellence. Sallengs said he nominated his staff for their professionalism and determination to make KASPER a national model for drug diversion detection and prevention.

"Without these people, KASPER wouldn't exist," Sallengs said.

As varied as the branch's duties may seem, all its functions are directed toward the goals of combating prescription drug abuse and diversion and improving patient care. Benvenuti said eKASPER is one of the most effective and efficient tools available to help achieve those goals.

The rapid reporting provided by eKASPER now makes it possible for:

- a physician to discuss a potential addiction with a patient before the patient leaves the physician's office;
- a law enforcement officer to work a half-dozen drug diversion cases in the time once spent on a single case;
- an emergency room physician to obtain a report at 2 a.m. and prevent an overdose; and
- a pharmacist to prevent a suspicious prescription from being handed to a drug dealer.

Benvenuti added that as powerful and useful an instrument as eKASPER is, the system's most profound value lies with its human components.

eKASPER "will never place itself in harm's way to conduct an investigation or to make an arrest; it will never persuade a patient to get treatment for an addiction; it will never refuse to fill an illicit prescription in the face of furious, even violent protest; it will never confront providers about their prescribing patterns; and it will never give up personal time with family and friends to find

creative solutions to combat prescription drug abuse, to complete a difficult investigation, serve on a task force or prosecute a criminal case," he said.

Pharmacists, physicians, law enforcement and staff of the cabinet's Drug Enforcement and Professional Practices Branch and the Division of Fraud, Waste and Abuse Identification and Prevention who work daily to make a difference in the health, safety, and welfare of Kentuckians by helping detect, prevent and eliminate prescription drug abuse "deserve the admiration of all Kentuckians," Benvenuti said.

Photos featuring foster children on display in Frankfort, Owensboro

Photos from the Shining Star Photo Gallery are on display through April 1 in Frankfort's Capitol annex tunnel and through April 15 at the Owensboro Department for Community Based Services office.

By Anya Armes Weber

Portraits of several Kentucky foster children who are waiting for adoption are on display in Owensboro and Frankfort.

Photos from the Shining Star Photo Gallery will be showcased through Friday, April 15, at the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services' Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) office at 311 W. Second St. Duplicates are featured in Frankfort at the Capitol annex tunnel through Friday, April 1.

The gallery is a collection of portraits by 18 professional photographers from the Louisville area. It is designed to help find adoptive families for children in the state's Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP). The cabinet and Louisville's WLKY Wednesday's Child -- a nonprofit organization that promotes public awareness of adoption -- are cosponsors of the display.

In the last 10 months, the gallery has traveled to Louisville churches, businesses, cultural events, the Louisville Adoption Fair and the Kentucky State Fair.

"Our hope is that the more people who see these photos, the better the chances of adoption are for these wonderful children," DCBS Commissioner Mike Robinson said.

About 400 SNAP children await adoption.



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Cabinet staff are eligible to adopt, and those who do may receive financial assistance from the state's Adoption Benefit Program. Log onto the Personnel Cabinet's Web site at <http://govnet.ky.gov/personnel/emphb/adoption.htm> for further information.

To learn more adoption and SNAP, log onto www.chfs.ky.gov/snap or call (800) 928-4303.

Louisville meeting on services to fathers will establish resource guide

By Anya Armes Weber

Fathers are the focus of a networking meeting next week in Louisville.



Metro United Way and Success by 6 are sponsoring a lunchtime meeting for guests to discuss services to fathers and ways to involve dads in community programs.

The group will meet from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. on Thursday, March 31, at the Metro United Way at 334 E. Broadway in Louisville. The building is at the corner of Broadway and Preston, and the meeting is in the second-floor community meeting room. Lunch will be provided.

A Louisville resource directory will be compiled based on the information discussed.

For more information or to R.S.V.P., call Cori Gadansky of Success by 6 at (502) 583-2822, ext. 239.

CHFS Focus Health Tip of the Week: Diabetes ALERT!

Could you have diabetes and not know it?



There are 18.2 million Americans with diabetes - and nearly one-third of them (or 5.2 million people) don't know it! Take this test to see if you are at risk for having diabetes. Diabetes is more common in African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. If you are a member of one of these ethnic groups, you need to pay special attention to this test. To find out if you are at risk, write in the points next to each statement that is true for you. If a statement is not true, write a zero. Then add all the points to get your total score.

Diabetes Risk Test

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
1. My weight is equal to or above that listed in the chart below?	5pts	0pts
2. I am under 65 years of age and I get little or no exercise during a usual day?	5pts	0pts
3. I am between 45 and 64 years of age?	5pts	0pts
4. I am 65 years old or older?	9pts	0pts
5. I am a woman who has had a baby weighing more than nine pounds at birth?	1pts	0pts
6. I have a sister or brother with diabetes?	1pts	0pts
7. I have a parent with diabetes?	1pts	0pts

Total Points: _____

Scoring 3-9 points

You are probably at low risk for having diabetes now. But don't just forget about it -- especially if you are Hispanic/Latino, African American, American Indian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander. You may be at higher risk in the future.

Scoring 10 or more points

You are at greater risk for having diabetes. Only your health care provider can determine if you have diabetes. At your next office visit, find out for sure.

At-Risk Weight Chart Body Mass Index

Height in feet and inches without shoes, and weight in pounds without clothing

4'10" – 129	4'11" – 133	5'0" – 138
5'1" – 143	5'2" – 147	5'3" – 152
5'4" – 157	5'5" – 162	5'6" – 167
5'7" – 172	5'8" – 177	5'9" – 182
5'10" – 188	5'11" – 193	6'0" – 199
6'1" – 204	6'2" – 210	6'3" – 216
6'4" – 221		

If you weigh the same or more than the amount listed for your height, you may be at risk for diabetes.

Diabetes Facts You Should Know

Diabetes is a serious disease that can lead to blindness, heart disease, strokes, kidney failure, and amputations. It kills almost 210,000 people each year. Some people with diabetes exhibit symptoms, some do not. If you have any of the following symptoms, contact your doctor:

- Extreme thirst

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- Frequent urination
- Unexplained weight loss

For more information on diabetes, visit <http://www.diabetes.org/home.jsp> or call 1-800-DIABETES.

The information contained in this American Diabetes Association (ADA) Web site is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment, and the ADA recommends consultation with your doctor or health care professional.

Secretary's Forums scheduled for March 30-April 1

By Anya Armes Weber

In a letter to Frankfort staff this week, Secretary James W. Holsinger encourages employees to attend next week's Secretary's Forums.



"Since July, I've looked forward to meeting with you again so we can discuss the things that impact you and our service to Kentucky's families," Holsinger wrote.

The staff forums will be in the health services building auditorium at the following times:

- **Wednesday, March 30:** 1-2 p.m.
- **Thursday, March 31:** 2-3 p.m.
- **Friday, April 1:** 10-11 a.m.

Supervisors will meet separately at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, March 30.

Holsinger told staff he will talk about some of the "hot topics" relating to our cabinet, and that staff will "have the chance to ask questions of our leadership panel about what's important" to them.

Regional staff will have access to forum transcripts online and will receive a videotape of the event.

Here is the agenda:

- Welcome
- Introduction of senior leadership team
- Governor's focus
- Cabinet Goals
- Secretary's Principles
- Legislative Review
- Elder Maltreatment

- Newborn Screening
- Budget/Spending Plan
- Medicaid
- eKasper
- Cabinet Web site -internet/intranet
- KY Health Medical Cards
- Wellness initiative
- Wellness Committee/Chairperson search update
- CHFS Wellness and Health Promotion/Get Moving
- DCBS Modernization
- Unbridled Spirit/Branding
- Updates
- Dress Code
- Newsletter readership
- Social Work Appreciation Month (March)
- Child Abuse Prevention Month (April)
- Q and A with Secretary and Senior Leadership Team

Signup for 'Get Moving Kentucky! Get Moving CHFS!' activity starts March 28

By Anya Armes Weber

Registration for "Get Moving Kentucky! Get Moving CHFS!" – a program designed to encourage staff to become more physically active – will begin Monday, March 28.



The program focuses on staff in the Frankfort CHR building, but anyone is welcome to participate.

Participants will complete a registration form that should be returned to Joyce Jennings, 375 E. Main St., 3C-G.

Look for a registration table in the CHR lobby or get your brochures with registration forms from Wellness and Health Committee members in your office.

Staff should sign up as teams of four, but if you sign up individually, you'll be connected with a team.

"Get Moving Kentucky! Get Moving CHFS!" kicks off April 10 with a 10 a.m. ceremony in the health services auditorium. Team activity will be monitored from April 10-June 3.

Teams don't have to exercise together but may benefit from the "buddy system." Teams will report their progress weekly.

Staff can register through Friday, April 8.

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Employee Enrichment



By Anya Armes Weber

Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.

You've prepared a 15-minute presentation and have been asked to cut it down to five minutes. There are ways you can compress your points without losing impact. Patricia Fripp, a San Francisco-based professional speaker, offers these tips to make your talk shorter and more powerful through TV-style "sound bites."

- **Don't apologize or mention that you usually have much more time.** Be confident that you can communicate in five minutes.
- **Begin fast.** Start with an attention-getting statement such as, "Your job won't exist five years from now," or "In the next five minutes I want to convince you the best action you can take is...."
- **Use a strongly visual story.** Illustrate your points -- how it is now and how it will or could be -- with a story so vivid that the audience can "see" it.
- **Divide your time into three parts.** Present a problem, a payoff and your point of view. For example: "The No. 1 piece of advice I can give you today is...." Your story will illustrate your idea, and your ending statement could be what will happen if your audience does what you suggest.